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THEODORE ROOSEVELT

A VERSE
SEQUENCE



BY
RUSSELL J. WILBUR

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT
A VERSE SEQUENCE

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

A VERSE SEQUENCE IN SONNETS AND QUATORZAINS

BY
RUSSELL J. WILBUR



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO MY FATHER
JOHN EDWARD WILBUR

PREFACE

ALL these sonnets and fourteeners, with three exceptions, were written while Colonel Roosevelt was still living; to be more nearly exact, just about six months before his death.

For all their romantic-fantastic character and metrical form these verses constitute, for the most part, a contemporary political document. Their tenor and sentiment presuppose Colonel Roosevelt to be, as when they were written, the predominant leader of the reconstituted Republican Party, the preëminent "possibility" of that party as a presidential candidate for the year 1920. They cannot be read understandingly except in view of these presuppositions.

There are thirty-eight pieces in all, written, with four exceptions, during the month from June 23 to July 24, 1918; between twenty-five and thirty of them during the three weeks ending July 14, the date of the death in battle of Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt.

This goes to say that the Sequence had received its *set*, so to speak, and its tone before this grim sorrow and the fortitude with which it was borne elevated the subject of these pieces to a plane upon which the freedom and ribaldry of criticism with which he is treated in this little work seem somewhat unfeeling and irreverent. Something of atonement for this indignity was attempted in the lines "Pæan Antiphonal"

which constituted, before the death of Colonel Roosevelt, the last sonnet of the Sequence.¹

The two sonnets entitled "Fulget Crucis Mysterium" and the final sonnet of the Sequence, as now published, entitled "Apotheosis," *b*, were written since the death of Theodore Roosevelt.

Colonel Roosevelt himself through the good offices of William Hard received a manuscript of the Sequence, and the great-heartedness which was, generally speaking, one of his most striking characteristics is manifest in his acknowledgments to Mr. Hard and to the author.

To Mr. Hard he replied:

"They have come; and I am really much interested in and pleased with them."

To the author he wrote:

"I very genuinely appreciate those poems of yours. . . . There are two or three of the descriptive epithets which I hope I don't altogether deserve — but perhaps I am a prejudiced witness! E.g., I don't quite see how, since the war came to the world, over four years ago, I 'did my friends betray' by the course I took — save the German 'friends' who had n't believed that I meant what I said. Now, I should very much like to have a talk with you and Hard, together, of some of the matters incidentally touched on in these poems — matters which concern me only as they concern all Americans who

¹ In a letter to the author Colonel Roosevelt wrote: "Naturally, the last poem touched me deeply; there's room for any amount of criticism about *me* — but my sons have rung true metal, and their wives, and my daughters and sons-in-law."

think as I do. Is there the least chance of your coming East?"¹

A subsequent letter to the author concludes as follows:

"I wish I could see you and talk of cabbages and kings and sealing-wax, and a great many other things!"

I must cry the theologians mercy that I have in one of the sonnets, speaking loosely rather than strictly and having regard to the virtual rather than the actual extension of the term, referred to the human race as constituting Christ's Body Mystical.

The sonnet "The Highbrow Press" is now somewhat superannuated. The *Survey* shortly after the death of Colonel Roosevelt published a fine number containing a symposium advertised upon the cover as "T. R. Social Worker" with Miss Jane Addams as the first contributor. The New York *Nation*, since its recent divorce from the New York *Evening Post*, and driven by the exigencies of Oswald Garrison Villard's radical pacifism is much less solicitous than formerly about vested interests and one hears less and less in its pages "the clank of Dives Villard's golden chains."

In the sonnet "The Cross-Moving Blade" *d*, Colonel Roosevelt is far too sharply disassociated from the idea of "world-wide federation." The first in the order of time among eminent and responsible contemporary political leaders to

¹ The phrase to which Colonel Roosevelt particularly objected, and of which he seems not to have understood the reference, "Thou didst thy friends without remorse betray," is contained in a rapid and impassioned summing up of his actions and policies consequent to the World War and alludes, in terms of scandalous hyperbole, to his part in bringing the Progressive Party to an end.

do so, he explicitly, definitely, and strongly committed himself to the project of a world league of nations to enforce peace, in his Nobel Peace Prize speech, at Christiania, Norway, on the 5th of May, 1910. During the second month of the World War, — to be exact, on September 23, 1914, — in an article in the *Outlook*, he advocated with equal emphasis and definiteness the formation of such a league at the end of this war.

In fact, after re-reading these two masterpieces of his statesmanlike provision, one is obliged to confess that the line in the sonnet "L'Intuition Bergsonienne" which reads, "Where Wilson thinks thou oft canst only feel," is the most questionable line in all the Sequence; not only that, it is, absolutely speaking, a very highly questionable line indeed.

One hopes that the readers of the third of the "T. R. Dionysus" sonnets will remember that the city of Ishpeming, in the northern peninsula of Michigan, was once upon a time the scene of a famous libel suit.

Twenty-one of the sonnets, in a shortened Sequence, were published in the *New Republic* of the issue of August 10, 1918, and I wish here to thank its chief editor, Mr. Herbert Croly, for permitting their subsequent publication in this little book.

RUSSELL J. WILBUR

St. Cronan's Rectory, St. Louis
March 22, 1919

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INTRODUCTION

THESE poems of Father Wilbur's must surely be ranked among the most successful of all efforts at political portraiture. Their place as poetry, their claim to success in putting politics into sonnets, will be much discussed. That technical question, if it be a technical one, I must leave to persons more technically competent. Humanly it is clear that these things by Father Wilbur in rhythm and rhyme reach the end and aim of art. They stretch the mind to new perceptions of the beauty and terror and humor of the theme they cover, and they carry us through fancy to truth not perceived by scientific means. Their judgment of Theodore Roosevelt is therefore essentially an æsthetic judgment.

Being so, the personality of their author might be irrelevant. If good wine needs no bush, art needs no biography. An æsthetic judgment proves or disproves itself. But this judgment here before us, besides being æsthetic, is frankly political and philosophical. Or, rather, it arrives at its æsthetic conclusion through a use, bold and lavish, of political and philosophical thought. The question therefore arises properly: What have been the mental experiences of this author to fit him to form such a judgment? The cleverness of the work of art cannot be established by any establishment of the cleverness of the artist; but when an artist insists on giving us the location of the

thought of Theodore Roosevelt in the history of the thought of the world, we are justified in a certain curiosity regarding his own mental history and character. For this reason, and within the limits which it sets, I venture to draw on a few of my personal recollections of Russell Wilbur.

I knew him first at a supper club which was formed in the environs of Northwestern University ostensibly to listen to the conversation of all of its members. I hope I do no injustice to the other members and give no offense to Father Wilbur when I say that the final purpose of the club was to listen principally to him. He was the conversational and intellectual amazement of my undergraduate days. He was himself still an undergraduate, and not yet a Catholic. He was especially skilled in Matthew Arnold and in all the controversies with which Matthew Arnold surrounded himself in England. He seemed to live largely in Arnold's hour. Faith was receding from earth's human shore. But what faith is, and whence it comes, and where it goes, held him even then. It held us too, when he spoke. His interest in philosophy (if one may still use the word broadly) was such that he could even transmit it.

We were not certain, however (and I mention this doubt of ours about him simply to indicate a certain comprehensiveness in his talents), whether he would grow up to be a professional philosopher or a professional operatic singer. His voice justified the stage. He was an artist in music before he was an artist in verse. We could imagine him, and the train-

ers of his voice did imagine him, singing to the public. We also imagined him sitting in the dust of a library doing his absorbing trick of turning the combats of philosophers into personal struggles between amusing persons.

He thereupon became head of the Northwestern University Settlement in Chicago and went in for social reform. We were not altogether surprised. The personalities which he put into philosophy, the gossip and the chatter about Huxley and Clifford with which he sprinkled Huxley's and Clifford's controversial views, had already apprised us of his interest in human beings. He continued, out of books as in books, to be most curiously capable of insatiably making the acquaintance of people in the very course of insatiably making the acquaintance of abstracted and formulated ideas.

In the multitudes of people he came to know while he was head of the Northwestern University Settlement there were three who had a special importance for the future sonneteer of Theodore Roosevelt. The first was Jane Addams. Her and her Tolstoianism Russell Wilbur knew well, and her and her personal character he revered with the humility which people feel toward Jane Addams and toward few other characters among us. When afterwards he turned aside to follow the strange militaristic god of Oyster Bay, he turned with his eyes open. He had seen non-resistance. He had seen it at its most beautiful.

He came to know also Raymond Robins, greatest of orators among the persons called radicals, afterwards head of

the American Red Cross Mission (with many characteristic adventures) in Russia during the war; and, thirdly, he came to know Medill McCormick, a young man from highly conservative antecedents (such as the *Chicago Tribune*), now United States Senator from Illinois. Robins and McCormick and Miss Addams all went into the Progressive Party and became large in it. Together they were a whole picture of it, spread intimately before Russell Wilbur's eyes.

In Jane Addams he could see the people who followed Theodore Roosevelt with immense devotion to Social Justice, but with scant conviction about Two Battleships a Year. In Medill McCormick he could see the people who with hard heads but open eyes perceived the social necessity and the social human decency of Roosevelt's programmes of reforms. In Robins he could see the people who walked in the middle, who were vehemently for social justice, but who, as they showed when the Great War broke out, were equally for the sterner needs of national defense and physical justice. In the three of them together he could see the whole political appeal of the most complex and most vivid of all Theodore Roosevelts — the Theodore Roosevelt of 1912.

In the midst of this picture and of this appeal, as they grew toward completion through many years, Russell Wilbur left the Northwestern University Settlement and became an Episcopal clergyman, and then left Chicago and was arch-deacon in the cathedral of the Episcopal diocese of Fond du Lac. From time to time we saw him, expressing to us, occa-

sionally, his growing conviction that one could not get very far, after all, by taking the unity of the visible Church in a Pickwickian sense; and fairly soon he was in the presence of the Roman Catholic archbishop of St. Louis, being inducted into the Roman Catholic Communion. He went then to Italy, to Rome, and studied, and returned to St. Louis, and began the duties, which he still performs, of assistant parish priest in St. Cronan's parish.

At the risk of seeming to say too much for my friend, I must confess and affirm that it seems to me to be unlikely that many men among those who speak to us through their writings have ranged the world's thought more actively than Father Wilbur — both the thought welling up out of the ground in our own day and the thought surviving to us in the great streams of discovery and of authority out of other days. His wealth, his extravagant wealth, of historical allusion and of modern phrase in the sonnets ensuing is perhaps a quite ample hint of his comprehensiveness of observation and of appreciation; and one might almost say that out of comprehensiveness these sonnets take their first motive and their final value. They do not give us the Roosevelt of a faction or of a moment. They give us Roosevelt's assemblage of conflicts, of human eternal conflicts, demanding to be resolved.

Father Wilbur saw Theodore Roosevelt vigorously resolving them. He saw him, and he has portrayed him, as a sort of Titanic human mountain-range in which the peaks of the

values of Radicalism and the peaks of the values of Toryism rise tumultuously—and in their very tumultuousness rightly and sanely—together. Through Theodore Roosevelt Father Wilbur observes and essays a synthesis of the eternal Radicalism and of the eternal Toryism of living life and also a triumphant assertion of the superiority of moral discernment which thought in the heights of action gains over thought in the shades of theory.

So his judgment of Roosevelt comes to be a judgment in personality. It is true, as he himself says, that he has confined himself to a consideration of Roosevelt “the public man” and has not attempted, and in fact has deliberately refrained from attempting, to “do justice to the nobility and the purity and the charm of Mrs. Roosevelt’s husband, Alice Roosevelt’s father, Oyster Bay’s neighbor, Seth Bullock’s friend, and Mr. Whigham’s table-companion.” This is true, and it is also true, as he himself again says, that “when I call Theodore Roosevelt envious, jealous, selfish, spiteful, and so on, I am speaking of him wholly in his public aspect.” Yes; but he is speaking of him, nevertheless, as a personality in action and not as a political platform or even merely a political mechanician. The judgment begins perhaps by being political. It ends certainly by being entirely personal—a vision of a man, of a man striving toward those issues of character which the State, like every other human institution, raises and carries to some sort of further development, noble or base.

To the seeing of this vision Father Wilbur brings at least a mind which has traveled, and has tarried for meditation, on more than one slope of the ascent to truth. Wholly a Catholic, partly a Tory, very much a Progressive, he could not have written these sonnets except after and through all his wanderings and sojournings. His philosophical materials must frankly be understood for what they are, in their Catholicism, in their Toryism, in their Progressivism, in their rejection of all straight-laced political sects and coteries. They are materials of a long accumulation, in a highly individualized combination. I do not claim for them any pre-eminence over all other sets of materials usable. My purpose is simply to note them, and to introduce Father Wilbur in the noting, and to say of them: —

As an artist Father Wilbur must speak for himself. As a thinker he may confidently be said to come to his painting of the political scene with a box of colors varied and abundant.

WILLIAM HARD

Washington
May, 1919

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
A VERSE SEQUENCE

PROEM

a. GRAVE

I CANNOT bring thee flawless works of art;
For first, in middle years, thou'st moved my soul
To pen thy portrait, illustrate the whole
Of thy magnificent and turbid heart.

Never before in life has't been my part
To speak in rhyme; to spend the stingy dolē
Of a small gift; or burn my scanty coal
Of thought and passion; feel the Muse's smart.

It goads me much to know so many blind
When right before their eyes upon the stage
Of our own time there looms one who doth bind
Ulysses' tireless craft with Hector's rage.
Look! sons and daughters of Columbia, find
An epic hero on her living page!

PROEM

b. GAY

**SPIRIT of Roosevelt! Strenuously descend
And take all pale consistency away;
Give me blunt, forthright speech the truth to say;
Let rough and smooth in due proportion blend.**

**Let there be smack and smatter reverend
Of classic letters' now archaic day,
With gusto, too, of snappy modern lay —
All which, well pondered, suits the gear I tend.**

**Great Theodore, wert thou of lesser span
This work one had not dared to perpetrate;
If thou these reckless lines dost deign to scan
One hopes that thou canst bear to estimate:
Better the faithful wounds of friendly man
Than thrusts of enemy exacerbate.**

ANTITHESES

a

Too childlike to dissimulate thy soul
 Its envy, pride, ambition, self-regard;
 Too hero-spirited to let the hard
 Average eyes see clear thy purpose whole.

Too framed for action and for common life
 To please the artist, scholar, sage, or saint;
 Of sloth and cowardice so free from taint
 That with the crowd, too, thou art doomed to strife.

And yet of that crowd's greater, saner part
 Its manlier, homelier traits and instincts sound,
 Time-honored decencies, the voice thou art,
 The type, exponent. Thus in thee is found,
 Though of patrician mould, high Nietzschean heart,
 Of simple democratic faith the ground.

ANTITHESES

b

**SILK-STOCKINGED mugwump, thou didst vote for Blaine!
When Harvard's famed Porcellian Club had sent
Thee boist'rous forth to exercise thy bent
For giving academic persons pain.**

**High-souled reformer, thou didst pact with Platt!
After "alone in Cuba" thou a war
Hadst reckless won. But Platt was passing sore
Thou didst enchain the corporations fat**

**To the State's car. Course antithetical
Thou dost pursue — the Union League Club's pride
And its despair. Career antipodal,
Now brash, now Machiavellian. Nought can hide
That still, in this grim hour, there is unfurled
Thy banner, Play-boy of the Western World.**

ELAN VITAL

ELAN VITAL from what pulsating deep
 Near to this Universe's very core,
 What reservoir tumultuous, from what store
 Of fiery energy dost seething sweep,
 As rushing waters o'er Niagara leap,
 A flood of life and power, with mighty roar
 Of joy exultant, through the soul's wide door
 Where Roosevelt's will a parlous guard doth keep.

It is heroic task to curb the tide
 Of life that comes too quick to be controlled,
 To harness such immitigable power.

Then honor him who, though he cannot hide
 The turbulence of passion through him rolled,
 Stands tense, the master of his fate, each hour.

THE PLATTUDINARIAN

THE truths by which man chiefly lives are few —
Trite, simple, platitudinous, and plain;
Our “intellectuals” can see no gain
In quaffing ever such insipid brew
Of doctrine. Thou — of all the sniffing crew
Of radicals, professors, æsthetes — bane,
Though rich-sophisticated twice again
As much as they, dost through thy whole life view,
Full of a kind of ecstasy and joy,
This simple homespun store of tested truth.
So energized thy soul, nothing can cloy
Its hearty maw that eager, decent youth
Willingly hears; which makes thee, tireless boy,
Of threadbare maxims preacher without ruth.

THE GOLDEN THREAD

THY master passion, Roosevelt, is the State;
Not formula thereof, abstract, jejune; no sour
Teutonic theory of unbridled power
Absolved from moral check. That dost thou hate.

But passion concrete, born of thy innate
Love of America, that she be dower
Of freemen bold, united; shining tower
Of justice and of culture; valor's mate.

Ambitious, envious, selfish as thou art,
Thou hast thy deepest self identified
With this high dream. Or rather, it's the heart
Of thy unconscious purpose; oft belied
By single acts of thine, it is the chart
By which the Unseen Powers thy course decide.

SUN SPOTS

a

DEMAGOGUE arts and tricks of charlatan,
Manipulator's ruses, astute shifts,
Consummate use of histrionic gifts,
Resourceful exploit of thy fellow man —

These things the Muse of History will scan
Ironically when her pen she lifts
To make thy record, when from silt she sifts,
Of thy career, its precious shining plan.

Knowing earth's satellite cannot prevent
Th' intrusion of the lower element
Although she governs sure the tidal boon;

Thy passion, rancor, violence will be,
For Clio, foam and surge upon the sea
Wind-swept, but yet obedient to the moon.

SUN SPOTS

b

EVEN thy envy's captious pride will seem
 Not weakness base of an else noble mind;
 But a creative artist's quick, purblind
 Impatience exigent, his turbid gleam
 Of petulance, because he cannot deem
 In other's work, however fitly wrought,
 The unique end achieved himself had sought,
 The beauty singular of his own dream.

Jealous Prometheus stole the fire from heaven.
 Unenvious, likely had not felt the nudge
 To such emprise. And thus was gained the leaven
 Of technic arts. Then blessed be the grudge
 Of Japheth and th' Ouranidai eleven
 The Titan brood — thus do the Muses judge.

TEMPERAMENT

T is melancholy gives unto the mind
 Reflection, elevation; to the style
 Distinction, whether long the bitter file
 For beauty simple or severe doth grind.

Thy soul and work miss not rotundity
 Of content, pith, force, humor, lively wit;
 Yet, lacking melancholy, never hit
 Burke's splendor and his rich profundity.

Depths and shoals of this strange temperament,
 To choicest natures as their portion sent,
 In thee do wholly want; thou lovest not
 The Rabelaisian jest and uncouth folly
 Of Lincoln's surcharged soul; and never got
 His brooding, high, majestic melancholy.

THE PHILISTINE

'T WAS Cromwell, Luther, Bunyan — Arnold named
Philistines, though ascribing genius great;
Had the sharp critic lived to see thy state
Another of like mould he had proclaimed.

In spite of savor in thee of the famed
Admirable Crichton, maugre elate
Romantic soul, aristocratic gait,
Thou too, Philistine, must be gently blamed.

'T is this that from thy side, alas, doth drive
Some choicest spirits, sons of Science cool,
Or to sweet Beauty's splendor all alive;

'T is this that lovers keen doth alienate
Of poor Assisi's blithe and holy fool
And of rich Florence's stern laureate.

TENSION

THE circle's perfect rondure smugly swings
 About one point. Th' ellipse — from *foci* two
 Antagonistic generated, true
 To inner law of tension — to me brings
 Similitude of thee. Thy nature rings
 With joy of common comradeship, the dew
 Of leaves of grass is on thee. Yet there 're few
 Like thee with eagle's eye, beak, talons, wings.

Two mystics mind me of like conflict tense,
 Twin morning stars, some say, of a new dawn;
 Exclude poetic genius which anoints
 Their names; include thy healthy *bourgeois* sense;
 And lo! thy soul's ellipse is rightly drawn —
Whitman and Nietzsche are thy focal points.

T. R. DIONYSUS

a. ZAGREUS

SOMETIMES Lord Dionysus is a Bull
 Furiously mad, with bellowing roar;
 About him Mænads and Bacchantes pour,
 And wooded heights with echoing cries are full.

Sometimes Lord Dionysus is a Snake
 Whose cunning length lies coiled amidst the grass;
 Now hissing spite when prey too far doth pass
 Or quick up barren crags his cave to take.

So men of fresh primeval glance and pith
 Did body forth strange likenesses that lie
 'Twixt beasts and souls, and plastic wove their tale
 Of gods and heroes. Had we power of myth
 Left fictile in us, bacchic we would cry,
Evoë! Roosevelt-Dionysus, hail!

T. R. DIONYSUS

b. BROMIUS

LORD DIONYSUS is the burgeoning Spring,
The Lord of Many Voices, when the rush
Of mountain torrents breaks the frozen hush
Of valleys where shrill revels soon will ring.

New sap of life to tree and grass doth bring
A birth again to quickened breath. The rush,
In green luxuriance, lines the streams which gush
From cool far dells o'er moss and stones to sing.

O Mystery of Life, rank, pulsing, wild,
Which swift through plants, beasts, men doth ceaseless
course,
Rich in surprises, strange fantastic forms —

Is it too much to see in him thy child,
Many-voiced Roosevelt, whose unflagging force
Our sluggish torpor stirs, our chill blood warms?

T. R. DIONYSUS

C. BACCHUS

**IACCHOS! Iacchos! heartening Vine,
Spirit of Ecstasy, mantic descend;
Make of our sloth and our cowardice end
When through our veins runs thy maddening wine.**

**Break down the barriers behind which repine
Powers long pent up which yearn for release;
Give to the humdrum of habit surcease,
Exhilaration, elation, divine.**

**"Iacchos! Iacchos! charlatan drunk" —
Thus bellowed round thee the plutocrat ring;
Pompous nonentities all in a funk,
Smitten as liars in far Ishpeming;
Varlets in torpor conservative sunk
Ken not thy bacchanals rightly to sing.**

FOUR-SQUARE

THE honest, rugged Cleveland prized thy youth,
 Worked through thee, with thee, in now far-off days.
 Censorious Godkin, exigent, did praise
 Thy double task commission. Uncouth
 Cow-punchers, prize-fighters, in hearty sooth
 Thee comrade deem. And Clio, in amaze
 At versatility, doth crown with bays
 "The Winning of the West," its verve, its truth.

Woodmen of Maine, half-breeds of Canada,
 Grave bishops heavy laden with their years,
 In South America and Africa,
 Of hard apostolate 'mid wildest parts,
 Whom memory of thy friendly sojourn cheers
 Grant thee the freedom of their loyal hearts.

CULTURE

THE politician, sportsman, in thee, hide
Somewhat thy worth of scholar genuine.
Thyself, in thine own instinct's cunning fine,
Dost, of set purpose, show thy ruder side.

Here, dost thou judge, coarse, massive charms reside
To draw and hold the crowd, who scarce divine
That culture, finer manners, wit are thine,
That stores of learning in thy mind abide.

Our "intellectual" classes make pretense
Thy public side is all there is of thee;
Thy gross humanity gives them offense.

Which, one may guess, is all the more intense
'Cause virtue thine and domesticity
Lend to their favored vices no defense.

T. MORALISTIC ROOSEVELT

YOUR "radical" and "intellectual"
Is just as full of science as can be;
Zoölogy hath e'en his benison;
He knows full well it brings home venison.

Why is he full of hate effectual,
Thou first-rate "outdoor scientist," 'gainst thee?
Is it because thou art spectacular?
Lack Wilson's elegance vernacular?

Or is't because in matters sexual
Pertaining to Anadyomene
Thou art no better than old-fashioned soul
When't comes to unions free and birth-control?

I think just there I've made the stroke heuristic —
The *New Republic* calls thee "moralistic."

NINETEEN TWELVE

I LIKE thee now, but I did like thee more
In nineteen twelve, when all the obscene train
Of Pharisees and Sadducees, with bane
Of lawyer-vermin, hypocrites, and corps
Of pimps and panders to the mighty whore
Plutocracy, like Penrose, Butler, Crane,
Did spit upon thee. All who grind amain
The faces of God's poor, and burdens sore,
Too heavy to be borne, on children bind
With fetters galling-tight of judge-made law,
Encompassed thee and maddened thee to schism.

Sepulchres whitened! Where there's nought to find
Save dead men's bones, and coming from their maw,
The acrid stench of foul conservatism.

NINETEEN TWENTY

OH, do not trust them! Though thy course doth lie
At present close to theirs and they do aim
To use thee, aye, to crown thee, for their game,
With leadership. Keep thou a wary eye!

They are not with thee. In dank, foetid sty
Of plutocratic greed can burn no flame
Of nationalist hope, as thine the same,
Whose heart from Mammon's lust is clean and dry.

Let them not use thee, but do thou use them!
Their skill and wealth right fitly are empowered
To arm the host that thou wilt lead, 'gainst horde
Of semi-Bolsheviki, whether stem
Of Marx or Wells, with millions richly dowered
By Hearst, by Baruch, and by Henry Ford.

KULTUR

a

ON *Magna Charta* and the Bill of Rights
 One cannot live forever; e'en Rousseau,
 Tom Paine, and Jefferson do somewhat grow
 Shop-worn; some exigency in us fights
 To force us upward unto greater heights
 Than Marx, Lassalle, or Proudhon e'er could know;
 With richer, higher hope we learn to glow
 Than Bentham's sons, the Cobdens, Mills, and Brights.

Freedom, equality, and brotherhood
 Do cry for supplement and balance true,
 For order, higher arts, and discipline;
 The State must nurture man's completest good,
 Although the finished specimens be few —
 Here Aristotle should our suffrage win.

KULTUR

b

ALL is not wrong in the "Kultur" ideal;
 'T will live in more humane, more gracious form;
 But synthesized with Anglo-Saxon norm
 Of freedom; stamped with democratic seal.

O'er time's strange sea, of man's emprise the keel
 Moves on to richer havens through this storm.
 Freedom is not enough; an envious swarm
 Of pedants only e'er must equal feel.

The rich complex of values that thou hast,
 The many-raying facets of thy soul,
 Th' integrity of instinct rooted fast
 In thy complete, will-dominated whole:
 'T is these, with grit, vim, gumption that should last
 To pilot us to culture's social goal.

THE LIBERAL

A LIBERAL yes, a libertarian no.
 Although not fond of jurist pedantry,
 No formalist to press the tyranny
 Of stale convention, though inclined to go
 Too cross-quick to thy goal, scorning the slow
 Safe round-about of regularity;
 Thou'rt yet of order and authority
 Th' uncompromising friend; the anarch's foe.

Full well thou lov'st that each should have free lot
 To build his destiny, his own course plan;
 Other equality than this forgot
 Thou hold'st the trained, free, bold, upstanding man
 As culture's goal — a humanist, but not,
 To suit the age, humanitarian.

TRUTHS ASTRINGENT

THAT even right cannot dispense with might,
That God himself is Love but also Power;
That gentle rectitude alone the hour
Of evil cannot stay nor cure its blight;

That e'en Utopia cannot long subsist
In peace and frugal plenty, without light
Of culture high, nor this, without the right
Of excellence on power to close its fist;

That man's task, to be sure, is to transform
What of the ape and tiger doth persist,
But also of the rabbit to resist
The rutting, of the lamb the silly, norm:

These truths astringent, tonic, thou hast taught,
Stern realist, by mollicoddles fought.

TRUTHS EXPANSIVE

THAT in each man a fund of worth doth lie,
That all have profit of the good of each;
That Commonwealth therefore the hand should reach
Of opportunity that each may try;

That loving solidarity of men
In brotherhood no task can find too high,
No racial barrier built beneath the sky
Eternally this mystic force can pen:

These truths expansive are the constant strain
Of souls adorably one-sided. Ken
They will not take of stinking, stagnant fen
In man, that grit and discipline must drain.

Only in Roosevelt's whirling orb there could
Enspheréd be Jane Addams, Leonard Wood.

FULGET CRUCIS MYSTERIUM

a

AN age of concentration stands and knocks,
Not of expansion. It is Gobineau
And Nietzsche, more than Tolstoi and Rousseau,
Can steel our purpose to withstand the shocks
Of Asia and the swarthy land that locks
The Middle Sea. And yet we must not throw
The Cross of Christ away nor headlong go
From Rousseau's whirlpool on to Nietzsche's rocks.

The Cross of Christ! Truth's self is Cross and strange!
How tawdry gleams the facile, specious breed
Of smooth idealists by Roosevelt's fire!
Who never learn that progress cannot change
The law of the Cross, the core of Roosevelt's creed:
Pay with thy body, Man, for soul's desire!

FULGET CRUCIS MYSTERIUM

b

So facts-astringent facts-expansive cross,
 And of their transverse tension there is born
 (On Chaos' breast like jewelled bauble worn)
 The universe itself, the Holy Cross;
 Upon which stretched in agony doth toss
 Christ's Body Mystical, the human race.
 Oh! happy they who early learn to embrace
 The mystery of pain and count but dross

Its blood and sweat! Of such, of such, art thou,
 Grim-visaged Berserker! Oh! there have lain
 In thy Norse cult of valor — ripening how
 We know not — seeds of wheat of finer grain,
 Not all unlike to that of old, I trow,
 Which grew — the Bread of Heaven — near Sharon's
 plain.

L'INTUITION BERGSONIENNE

THERE is an intellectual instinct deep,
Concrete-intuitive it takes its course;
More than abstract-discursive reasoning's force
It has, the depths to plumb, the heights to sweep.

Experience 't is that makes its pulses leap,
Imaginative sympathy its source;
With all reality it holds discourse
Where through subconscious mind life's currents seep.

For what of intellect the statesman needs,
Of speculative power, thy gifts are poor;
Where Wilson thinks thou oft canst only feel.

But when the future judges by thy deeds
'T will hold thee, pragmatist, an instinct-sure
Intuitive evaluator of the real.

THE Highbrow Press

THE *Survey* doth not like thee; e'en Saint Jane
 In grief doth ban thee from the sacred fane.
THE *Public* cannot bear thee; Henry George
 In hidden heavens thunderbolts doth forge
 To lay thee low. From mouldy cerements
 Of mid-Victorian days, there come the vents
 Of Garrisonian passion's high disdains,
 With clank of Dives Villard's golden chains.

The *Nation* to the *New Republic* cries,
 The latter to the *Masses* — cunning elf
 Itself to "liberate" by quick disguise,

They charge thee not with murder, pilfered pelf;
 No! No! 'T is thus the accusation lies:
Oh, Theodore, why art thou so thyself!

THE PAIR OF SHEARS

OUR English cousins hold in better light
 One feature strong of Party Government:
 That Opposition's constant drive is sent
 As goad, lash, check and complement, with might
 Of criticism sharp, with bitter spite
 Of rivalry, to press the course's bent.
 We'd hold in our good-natured sentiment
 Wilson and thee as brothers in our sight.

A pair of brothers! That's to fall in rut
 Of ordinary thought. The notion fades
 When one beholds how 't is with pair of shears
 Columbia's hand firm-flexing skills to cut,
 'Mid gnash and bite of two cross-moving blades,
 The ample garment of her coming years.

THE CROSS-MOVING BLADE

a

THE moon that saw, o'er Flanders bounds, the might
 Of frightfulness break forth from Prussian lair,
 Found thee obliged in gratitude to spare
 Three months of strenuous battle for the bright
 Cordon of leaders who in name of right
 Had joined thee in adventure bold.¹ This care
 Scarcely discharged, and thou didst rouse, with blare
 Of trumpet voice and torch of flaming spite
 'Gainst Belgium's foes, thy sleepy countrymen
 Fat gorged by Mammon's feast, by shams deceived,
 Adulterously fond — or full of hate —
 Of other lands. O Gambler, it was then,
 With past reverses still all unretrieved,
 That thou didst risk on single throw thy fate.

¹ In August, September, and October, 1914, Colonel Roosevelt was engaged in supporting Messrs. Gifford Pinchot, James Garfield, Raymond Robins, Victor Murdock, and others of the Progressive Party leaders of 1912 who were seeking election to the United States Senate or other important offices. His well-known letter, insisting upon our responsibility in the matter of Belgium, appeared in the *New York Times* November 8.

THE CROSS-MOVING BLADE

b

O PATRIOT-GAMBLER! thou a game didst play
 For stake more precious than thine own career:
 Thy country's unity, the costly gear
 On gaming-table left by strange delay
 Of one whose hand might have been raised to stay
 Poor Belgium's rapers, not to soothe our ear
 By bland vibration of the lute-strings blear
 Of strict neutrality. Let future day
 Assess what compensation did reside
 In Wilson's tactic. 'T was thy costly part
 To stir our conscience, mind us of our state
 Unready; racial predilections chide;
 Shame us to stand, more tensely one in heart,
 Th' intrepid steady challengers of fate.

THE CROSS-MOVING BLADE

c

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, thou didst will this war,
And, more than any single other, force
The issue of our entrance; didst divorce
Our nation's heart from sloth and sophists' lore;

Into unwilling ears a stream didst pour
Of fiery warning; didst pursue a course
Brittle and steep; thy friends without remorse
Betray; our rulers press with cavils sore.

So if this war shall bring — God will it may! —
First fruits to realize thy lifelong dream
Impassioned, of America's rebirth
To tenses unity — then one dare say
By Washington's and Lincoln's there shall gleam
Thy name and memory in rival worth.

THE CROSS-MOVING BLADE

d

AND if by side of thine a name shall gleam —
 For Roland, Oliver; a Jefferson
 Played fitly to thy rôle of Hamilton —
 'T will be because war shall fulfill a dream
 More lofty than thine own, (to thee doth seem
 Top-lofty?) the sweet hope that there be won
 An everlasting peace and that the sun
 Of world-wide federation shed its beam.

If this be statesmanship and if the Rome
 Of world-democracy shall pass from bricks
 To marble under Wilson's hand — 't is well!

And thou wilt something have to learn at home
 At Oyster Bay or, past th' atrocious Styx,
 Upon Elysian fields of asphodel.

DE

ENVOY

am -

Oh, 't is not thus that I farewell would say,
With smirk ironical and banter bland,
Where all America owes debt too grand
For instant praise or lasting fame to pay.

1

seem

on

On many a simple man who ne'er did lay
His eager eyes on thee nor grasp thy hand,
On many a careworn woman through the land,
On me, too, debt more personal doth weigh.

Let all who read, then, know in thee I find —
All vehement, flawed, turbid as thou art —
Abundant storehouse whence I feed with dole:

*The sanity and balance of my mind,
The hope, the joy and valor of my heart,
The energy and passion of my soul.*

PÆAN ANTIPHONAL ¹

LIFT up your heads, Columbia's mighty gates!
Who are they that pass forth? The brave, the young;
 They march, while loving hearts with fears are wrung,
 To France, where destiny on valor waits.

Be lifted up, Columbia's doors! *The fates*
Are dreadful; some must lie unsung,
Of distant fields and foreign harvests dung,
While parents mourn their darlings, wives their mates.

Lift up your heads, Columbia's gates, and sing!
Who passes in unto my heart of hearts?
 'T is he whose sons do whole fulfillment bring,
 Whose breed dares finish what the father starts;
 They pass together to th' Eternal Spring,
 They pass, with all who, valiant, do their parts.

¹ Written to be added to the already completed Sonnets and Quatorzains Rooseveltian after the death of Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt.

APOTHEOSIS

a

RESILIENT world, Gargantuan, picturesque,
Blown by no breath of dire caducity,
World of gigantic, comic vanity,
Of shapes fantastic, lovable, grotesque!

Would that Cervantes, Shakespeare, Rabelais —
Prolific three — had lived to see the hour
When Nature's self put forth her comic power
Quixote's antitype at Oyster Bay!

O gargoyle shape! The smile dentiferous,
The cowboy hat, eyeglasses, and big stick,
The gesture of "The Luck of Roaring Camp"!

Gay wilt thou live, timeless, vociferous,
Breathing the air of egotism thick
With Falstaff, Tartarin, and Mrs. Gamp.

APOTHEOSIS

b

BE still, thou ribald bard! Hast thou no shame?
 When thine eyes rest on one of Plutarch's kind,
 The scion of an elder race, art blind?
 Be still and fear a living bush aflame
 With puissant will; revere an august name
 Which gallant youths in days to come will find
 In many a tale by new Froissarts designed
 To prick clean hearts to court a shining fame.

Hark! what strange horns are blowing! Silence, bard!
 Siegfried and Roland from the welkin's dome
 Their clarions wind; and bursting mortal shard, —
 Earth's ashes to earth's ashes, loam to loam, —
 Theodore the Viking journeys to Asgard
 To find mid_th' Æsir his empyreal home.

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